



Nevada Certified Drinking Water Operator's Forum

Hosted by: Nevada Division of Environmental Protection, Bureau of Safe Drinking Water
901 South Stewart Street, Suite 4001, Carson City, NV 89701

Meeting Minutes

Combined Meeting with the Nevada Water and Wastewater Training Coalition

Summary minutes of the meeting of June 1, 2011

The meeting began at 10:10 a.m. in the Nevada Department of Conservation 2nd floor Conference Room, 901 S. Stewart Street, Carson City, Nevada.

Videoconference to:	NDEP Las Vegas Office,	and	Great Basin College
	Red Rock Conference Room		1500 College Parkway
	2030 E. Flamingo Rd., Suite 230		Lundberg Hall, Room 114
	Las Vegas, NV		Elko, NV

Phone conference to: 1-888-363-4734, access code 1515199

1. Call to Order and introductions (Forum Chairman Harvey Johnson and NTC Chairman Bob Foerster). The meeting was called to order at 10:08 a.m..

Forum Members Present: Chairman Harvey Johnson (IVGID); Vice Chairman John Hulett (WCDWR); Cameron McKay (KGID); Bob Foerster (NvRWA), Lynn Forsberg (Elko video-conference);

Nevada Training Coalition (NTC) Members Present: Chairman Bob Foerster; Don Allen (SSMWC); Dave Johnson (Las Vegas video-conference)

Members absent: Tom Georgi (LVVWD)

Representing the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP): Jennifer Carr, Chief, Bureau of Safe Drinking Water (BSDW); Kelly McGowan, Environmental Scientist, Operator Certification (Op Cert) Program; Nan Paulson (Op Cert Administrative Assistant); Michelle Stamates, NDEP SRF Technical; Marcy McDermott, NDEP Water Lines; Joe Maez, NDEP BWPC

Carson City attendance: Riz Martinetti, Peter Leresche, Steven Palmer

Elko attendance: Evan Fonger, Jim Tharp, Dale Johnson

Telephone attendance: George Tinkorang, Mike Ariztia joined at 11:00

2. Approval of Minutes – March 10, 2011 Meeting

Motion: Cameron McKay made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, the motion was seconded by Bob Foerster, and the vote was unanimous in favor.

3. Discussion and Possible Action – Review of Draft Forum & NTC Consolidation Charter (Foerster)

Cameron McKay began the discussion with an expression of gratitude to Bob Foerster for his dedication and hard work this consolidation required.

Bob Foerster reviewed the proposed changes and there was some discussion regarding section 3.3- Membership Make-up. The Forum now has seven members and the NTC has five. With the consolidation, the total would be twelve, which is too large. After a general discussion, it was agreed that a maximum number of members should be nine. A name for the new Forum could be Nevada Water and Wastewater Operator's Forum (NWWOF).

NTC Chairman Foerster moved to dissolve the NTC per article 11 of their bylaws and merge with the Nevada Certified Drinking Water Operator's Forum (NCDWOF) per the Charter revisions dated May 2011, as amended June 1st. If any assets are found to exist, they will be distributed. Bob added that there were no known assets but he would look. Don Allen seconded the motion. The members voted; all were in favor.

Forum member Foerster made a motion to consolidate NCDWOF with NTC under the Charter just discussed and edited June 1, 2011. This will be with Board members of the Forum and active members of the NTC (Mike Ariztia, Dale Johnson, Don Allen, and Bob Foerster). Cameron McKay seconded the motion. The members voted; all were in favor.

Cam McKay said the new Forum will be reviewed after it is amended and the designated members will be determined regarding which group each will represent. Jennifer Carr said she will help by sending an email.

4. Drinking Water Operator Exam – March 2011 Statistics Review

Observations: Kelly McGowan reviewed the statistics from the March Exam. He commented on how Math continues to be an issue for testers. Cameron McKay added that the exam results will be skewed due to more testers being present at the Conference in Reno.

Kelly talked about the Grade I Distribution regarding Disinfection Math. The test results appear to show that the operators either know Disinfection or they don't. With Grade II in Maintain Equipment, there is no Partial Mastery. Again, it seems they either know it or they don't.

Cam McKay remarked that Safety still appears to be another issue for testers, although they seem to have concentrated more on Safety than Math. He stated that both are important. Cam discussed the issue of the operator practice in mathematical background on operational activities that need focus. Too many operators seem to rely on "tweaking" the system versus calculating how they should set chemical doses, etc.

Bob Foerster mentioned the NvRWA is losing funding for training in August. They will only be able to maintain Confined Space and Open Trench training. Both are very important to the industry.

Vice Chairman John Hulett suggested that larger systems have staff specializing in certain areas and it may help to have a practice sheet that people could use periodically. Operators are not having exposure to disinfectant procedures. It would be good to have some written up so the operators could practice with math, if the procedures explained how to do it. Whatever can be done might reinforce how to do math, such as using flows, rates, concentrations, etc.

Cam McKay asked if NDEP could post items for the operators. Jennifer told him yes, if someone would develop a "How To" article, NDEP would post it. John Hulett said he would be happy to get something started.

Dave Johnson in Las Vegas said there is so much difficulty with math that they put together a math training program. He will look into it to see if it can be a starting point to help testers. Dave added that SCADA has strategies and he will get material.

Jennifer Carr asked if the wastewater side has similar stats for review. Harvey said he's reviewed them and that generally, the grades 1 and 2 seem to do ok but grades 3 and 4 seem to struggle, often with math. Jennifer McMartin compiles those stats. Harvey added that the on-line exams appear to have a higher pass rate. He

believes it is because the testers are able to better concentrate since other testers are not there moving around and getting up and down.

Riz Martinetti asked how to take an on-line test. Harvey explained that in the north and south, it can be taken at H & R block. The cost is an extra \$68 per test.

George Tinkorang said the AWWA Wastewater certification does not translate directly or is not recognized. Example: If a Grade I operator wants to test for a Grade II, the test will only allow a Grade I test. George will send Jennifer McMartin an email with details so this can be addressed.

Kelly McGowan acknowledged the AWWA as trying to introduce on-line testing for drinking water. Kelly said that when he took the on-line test, he was finger-printed and photographed. There were some issues with the proctoring. He mentioned that Iowa no longer does paper testing, and they have a higher pass rate, along with scores being given immediately.

5. NDEP Updates (Jennifer Carr/Kelly McGowan)

5a. On-Line Approved Contact Hour Training Calendar & Other Operator Resources

Bob Foerster asked Kelly McGowan for an update on NDEP. Kelly mentioned that before he started in January of this year, a lot of requests for approval of training were sitting, awaiting review. Kelly has now reviewed them and they are posted on SDWs website. In the future, Kelly would like to include a link for operators to use for training information.

WWET has Ultra Violet Light training in Southern Nevada. Mueller, Western Supply, has free training. UNR had approved training. The City of Henderson has a maximum of one training per month. AWWA will be having membrane training soon. He added that the calendar is up to date and a review of on-line training resources is coming along. American Water College, Target Safety, and AWWA's Ace II Conference are on-line approvals that have been handled. Ace II cannot be done individually, but if a utility proctors the sessions, that will be ok.

The American Water College has on-line training. The AWWA is asking for approval for virtual training but it is not for individuals.

5b. 2010 NDEP Determination on Safety Training Hours for Drinking Water Certificate Renewal

Jennifer Carr reviewed the October 2010 issue of CEU time for Safety Training. A decision was made regarding safety training and the number of CEUs operators will get. For clarity, Jennifer has determined that Drinking Water operators will be approved for 2.5 hrs for safety training. Reading from a prior October 2010 e-mail, Jennifer reviewed:

“We have traditionally only approved ½ of the contact hours for a renewing operator to be from safety or other courses that are not directly related to Water Distribution or Water Treatment Operation topics. For parity between level 1 and 2 operators, (for which 50% safety training would permit only 2 1/2 hours) versus level 3 and 4 operators (for which 50% safety training would permit up to 5 hours for the same class) I am going to approve safety courses at 2 ½ hours for Drinking Water Operator Certification renewals.

I have spent a lot of time thinking this through over the past few days to try and figure out what is (1) fair, (2) protective of public health, and (3) advances the profession of Drinking Water Operator Certification, all at the same time. Assuming that there will be push-back from some 3 & 4 level operators who may think they are getting shorted, I

would say that those higher level operators have more responsibility for complex systems, and need to focus more of their training efforts on professional development within their chosen field in order to be more protective of public health. If an operator gets hurt, it is very unfortunate of course; but if people get sick because of a problem with the quality of their water, that's a whole different ball game.

I would prefer, this year [2010], to only approve safety hours at 2 ½ for any operator who is renewing, but if that presents a hardship to a "3 or a 4" who was expecting to get his/her safety hours approved for 5 hours, please let me know and I'll address it on a case-by-case basis. Next year [2011], the 2 ½ hour rule will apply, and I'll post this on the website & work to get the word out."

5c. Expired Certificates (as of December 31, 2010) – Reinstatement Deadline June 30, 2011

Kelly McGowan announced there are over 140 operators with expired certificates. Per Bob Foerster, The NvRWA has again agreed to help make calls to find out the operators' status. Kelly reiterated the importance of getting operators to reinstate their certificates prior to June 30th. Cam McKay asked if the problem was the operators changing their addresses. This is only part of the issue.

Kelly added that personally contacting operators is vital because if the expired certificate is to an operator who is the operator in charge of a public water system, then that system may not have an operator. Kelly has asked an NDEP IT technician to create an auto generation of a letter or post card for non-renewed operators, as another form of notification.

5d. Jennifer Carr noted that the proctoring contract with the AWWA expires in July. It is out for RFP due to State Purchasing requirements.

6. Waterlines Publication

6a. Article Assignments for Fall 2011 Edition

Bob Foerster reviewed ideas from the last meeting's agenda, item 7a, regarding articles for Waterlines publication. Bob recommended an article about the merger of the Forum and the NTC. John Hulett noted the Washoe County Energy Management article has been completed. Jennifer noted that the de-chlorination article has not been finished. Chairman Johnson said LT2 at IVGID is not far enough along yet so it will have to be in future publications.

John Hulett suggested an article with a word problem in a math question format for operators to work through. It would be better practice than a multiple choice question. Maybe it would help them pass the tests. Cam McKay added that he would like to see a different practice question per issue. Bob proposed a practice question for water and one also for wastewater. John offered to work on a question for each. He will attempt to get this accomplished so the group can review, and possibly get them to Waterlines in time for the publication deadline.

Marcy McDermott advised the members that the current issue will be late and may be published in September. She will do whatever the members decide. It could be ready the first week of October. There were five articles scheduled but only two have been received. The training section is light and not all calendars are up to date.

Marcy replied to a question about feedback that some operators are not receiving Waterlines. She said that approximately 3,500 are emailed. Emailing is helpful because it saves time and money that paper mailing results in. NDEP cannot afford to pay someone to prepare the mailings and pay for the postage. She added that there is a possibility under consideration of mailing one copy to each water system. They can then post the article and/or make copies and set them out for operators to read in their break rooms.

Currently, just printing 550 is costing \$1,500-1,800, and some get returned because operators have moved. Also, some operators who move out of state want a paper copy mailed to them. For these reasons, an attempt is being made to only email the publications. Marcy added that it used to cost \$7-10,000 to mail paper copies. Bob and Cam suggested a marketing effort be made to trim the mailing list. Bob also stated he is not opposed to sending only emails to people out of state. Cam agreed to this as a way to save money. Cam also said that the IVGID prints one or two copies for operator to share at their office.

Marcy added that currently Waterlines is made for magazine printing. If it were made for emails only, Waterlines could be made differently and be an easier read for email. Jennifer said a postcard could be mailed to request email addresses.

Marcy advised the members that Waterlines has no back stories. Training from UNR through December will be listed but others have only submitted training through August. It would be best to have six months of training available for publication, in case any gets missed. Cam said training at the lake can be done October through May 1st. Jennifer offered to have links to training put on websites.

7. Member's Open Comments

John Hulett stated the meeting today was a great step in simplifying things for operators.

Marcy McDermott said she needs Forum member contact information to put in Waterlines. Jennifer replied that she will update the website.

Harvey Johnson discussed his research on the Certified Water Professional designation. The Water Environmental Federation is taking a lead on this and the Forum may want to monitor that progress.

Bob Foerster mentioned the National Rural Water University. Dale Johnson added that the university has an on-line program that tests and produces a certificate. It has a training program manual to prep for the exam. The operator will get the training manual and have 120 days to take the test. They will get a link on-line.

Cam McKay stated we need to get the word out to the old and new operators that they should be seeking training; it is not always given to them. It is a career that has to be worked for. It would be to the operator's advantage if they realized they need to also get training on their own.

8. Public Comments

Riz Martinetti talked about math and that he would be willing to help write and/or review math questions. Steven Palmer added that articles in Waterlines about math and the reasons why it is important would be helpful. The article can talk about distribution math and disinfection math. It would help operators if they knew why math was so critical.

9. Upcoming Meetings

The tentative schedule for meetings are September 15 and December 15.

10. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn made by Bob Foerster. It was seconded by Cameron McKay. All were in favor.